FARMINGTON SELECT BOARD Tuesday, September 26, 2023

The conduct of the meeting included remote access by telephone, video, and electronic means. The public could attend in person or by viewing the live stream at http://mtbluetv.org/program-live-streamfarmington-selectmen.html or Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/MBTV11/ or calling 578-7395.

Chairman Matthew Smith called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present: Stephen Bunker, Joshua Bell, Byron Staples, and Dennis O'Neil. Police Chief Kenneth Charles, Planning Assistant Cindy Gelinas, Stephen Eldridge, Interim Town Manager, Leah Giusti, Executive Assistant, MBTV Camera Operator, and members of the press and members of the public were also present. Members of the press and public participated remotely as authorized by PL 209, c.617.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Matthew Smith led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 6: To review and sign Town Manager Employment Agreement

The Board moves Item 6 up in order to introduce the new Town Manager, Erica LaCroix. It has been a long process to find the right candidate and they are very happy with the results.

Ms. LaCroix stated that she is excited to come on board. She knows Dick Davis and stated that she has big shoes to fill. Leaving town with wonderful staff in Winslow, but Farmington is a great town. She considers this a big step forward and is looking forward to the opportunity.

Mr. Bunker stated that Ms. LaCroix has met with department heads and knows our community and department heads worked for a long time without someone in the corner office. He is pleased that the time was well worth it. Thrilled to have her. Her start date is December 13, 2023.

Selectman Bell made a motion to sign; Selectman O'Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 2: To hold a Public Hearing regarding proposed changes to the following Ordinances:

- Site Review Ordinance
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Licenses Ordinance

Chairman Smith opens the public hearing. Cindy – state mandated addition to the ordinances.

Smith closes the public hearing and brings it back to the board.

Selectman Bell noted that when going to the planning board for approval, they might look into changing the language of the word "normal".

Selectman Bell made a motion to accept the proposed changes to the Site Review Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Licenses Ordinance; Selectman Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 3: Downtown T.I.F. Committee Future Project Expenses

Buzz Davis, Chairman of the T.I.F. Committee, approaches the Board. The committee has been active for a number of years and has had success with development in the downtown area, Church Street parking lot, Bridge Street, and Front Street. He is here to present recommendations for the fund. The current balance is \$190K, they need \$10K to reach commitment. Recommending that funding be added for two items: request for decorations for the downtown for the holiday season. All expenditures must be economic development related, this would be to promote small business shopping. Public Works Director Phil Hutchins has already budgeted \$3K for decorations. Mr. Davis is asking that the Board commit \$13K from the T.I.F. fund for the downtown decoration project for this holiday season.

His second request is for T.I.F. the development plan itself. There are several projects they would like to pursue, but not written in. Only central blocks of the downtown. Marketing, bus tours. Has not touched upon opportunities for the development of amenities, growth in hospitality, and related service industries. Natural features in the downtown, further trail development, make it a trail center as an attraction to the community, to draw people to the area and make it a better place to live and more attractive for university students. They would like to renew the plan by going back to the firm that wrote the plan 10 years ago, Eaton Peabody, to amend and bring it up to date. They have received a cost estimate of \$5,000. He is requesting the board fund \$10,000 for further planning of the development district allowed within the program.

Tonight, he is proposing \$13,000 for the shop local campaign on Main & Broadway, and \$10,000 for the cost of a renewed T.I.F. plan.

Selectman O'Neil inquired as to how long it would take to amend the plan, when would they start, and how long would it take. Mr. Davis stated that they would like to have something ready to be approved at the Town Meeting. He also recommends sticking with Eaton Peabody as they developed the original plan.

Clarified that money for future projects could be put in the fund now but could not be allocated until the plan is changed. Could be designated but not spent.

Selectman Bunker made a motion to approve requests for \$13,000 holiday shop local project and \$10,000 to retain Eaton Peabody to create renewed T.I.F. document; Selectman O'Neil seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 4: To review Application for Renewal of On-Premises License for Sabaidee
Thai Restaurant

Selectman Bunker made a motion to approve the Application for Renewal of On-Premises License for Sabaidee Thai Restaurant; Selectman Staples seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 5: To review Application for On-Premises License for Sushi & Thai Smile Restaurant

The Selectboard reviewed the application. It appears this is for a new license, not a renewal and there is information missing.

Selectman Bell made a motion to table the application until such time as a public hearing is scheduled and more information is presented; Selectman Smith seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 7: To review the Board of Appeals application of Richard M. Morton

Selectman Bunker made a motion to approve the Board of Appeals application of Richard M. Morton; Selectman Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 8: To review the Zoning Board application of Jennifer Bjorn

Selectman Smith made a motion to approve the Zoning Board application for Jennifer Bjorn; Selectman Staples seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 9: To review Agreement for Town Attorney Services with Preti Flaherty

The Board reviewed the agreement. Mr. Eldridge states that the attorneys would like to come to a meeting and introduce themselves to the Board.

Selectman Smith made a motion to approve the Agreement for Town Attorney Services with Preti Flaherty; Selectman Bunker seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 10: To hear from James Cote regarding the High Peak National Wildlife Refuge

James Cote approached the board. This past Spring, Fish & Wildlife proposed a 200,000 acre wildlife refuge between Weld and Flagstaff Lake. Their opposition is not to conservation, rather injecting Federal ownership into the economy. Recreational access will be altered over time. Commitments they make today can be changed down the road. They want to see these areas grow with conservation, but not in the form of a Federal refuge. There are already 90,000 acres in conservation in Franklin County. They would prefer local control. Mr. Cote circulates a letter to the Select Board. Senators Collins and King, Congressman Golden, and Governor Mills have come out against the Federal refuge. Sugarloaf and other forest companies have signed onto the letter already.

Selectman Bell inquires as to why they want a refuge in this area. They speculate that it is due to the government's 30/30 plan -30% of land in conservations within the next 30 years. Selectman Bell asks how many landowners would be affected. Mr. Cote stated likely hundreds, including Sugarloaf, Saddleback, and Tribal Lands.

Selectman Smith made a motion to support the letter against national refuge; Selectman Bell seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 11: To Approve the Minutes of 9/12/23

Selectman Bell made a motion to approve the minutes of 9/12/23; Selectman Smith seconded.

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 5 MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 12: To Discuss Other Business

Mr. Eldridge informed the Board that the Kyes Insurance agent, Flint Christie came into the office today with the updated insurance premiums. There has been a 14% increase over last year. Selectman Staples inquired about litigation insurance. Mr. Eldridge will ask Mr. Christie Selectman Bell asked about bidding out for insurance. Mr. Eldridge stated that it was not bid out, the Town has been with this company for 30 years. However, it is always prudent to look around. MMA can be very competitive.

The Board would like to see tax rate scenarios from Dirigo Assessing at the next Board meeting.

With regard to Public Works mowing, the mowing has been contracted out. Previously, they would rent a machine from HP Fairfield, but they no longer offer that service.

With regard to the revaluation to be done by KRT, Mr. Eldrige has not heard anything from them, and he will reach out.

Selectman O'Neil is looking for clarification on nepotism in the personnel policy. Selectman

Smith stated that it is a town manager issue. Mr. Eldrige brought it up with Mr. Hutchins but will follow up and ensure that we are adhering to the policy. Aileen Kennedy mentioned to the board that there have been other instances were relatives were not employed due to the policy. Selectman Smith stated that he will not listen to accusations when people are not here to defend themselves.

| Selectman | i Bell made a motion to adj | ourn at 7:42 | p.m.; Selectman O'Neil seconded. |
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| VOTE | AFFIRMATIVE | 5 | MOTION CARRIED |
| Minutes re | spectfully submitted by Leal | h Giusti. | |
| Byron Star | oles - Secretary | | _ |